

____ JOINT RESOLUTION NO. ____

INTRODUCED BY _____

(Primary Sponsor)

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA OPPOSING ANY FURTHER ACQUISITION OF LAND IN THE STATE OF MONTANA BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND ASKING THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MORE FULLY CONSIDER THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE OF MONTANA WHEN MAKING LAND USE DECISIONS.

WHEREAS, the federal government already owns over 650 million acres, roughly 30% of the nation's land, and another 1.76 billion acres of offshore lands and water, which when combined total a larger land and water mass than the entire 50 states; and

WHEREAS, the federal government already owns 28% of Montana's land and has demonstrated the capacity to own as much as 83% of a state's land as in the example of Nevada; and

WHEREAS, recent efforts in Congress to vastly expand federal ownership of lands in the West represent an arbitrary and reckless land grab; and

WHEREAS, federal acquisition of land results in an opportunity cost to states and to the nation; and

WHEREAS, federal guidelines for payments in lieu of taxes are less likely to provide additional compensation to areas of low population density; and

WHEREAS, the United States faces an economic crisis that is exacerbated by setting millions of additional acres off limits from productive private sector use; and

WHEREAS, tens of millions of acres of federal land in the West have already been withdrawn from mineral and energy production, as well as other productive uses that may be vital to the nation's economic recovery and our ultimate national economic and energy security; and

WHEREAS, Montanans are better positioned to determine the best and proper use of our lands than federal agencies.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

(1) That the citizens of Montana ask that the federal government more fully consider the interests of the people of Montana when making land use decisions.

(2) That if the federal government engages in a land swap or any kind of a land-for-land exchange, the land swap or exchange does not increase the amount of land owned by the federal government.

(3) That the Secretary of State send copies of this resolution to the President of the United States, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Majority Leader and Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate, the Montana Congressional Delegation, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of the Interior, the Chief of the United States Forest Service, the Regional Forester of the United States Forest Service Region 1, and the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

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